

Veteran's Treatment Courts

A Primer

An Overview

- What are they?
- Why do they exist?
- Who do they serve?
- How are they structured?

What Are Veteran's Treatment Courts?

- Alternatives to traditional justice system approach
 - i.e., prison, jail, straight probation
- Focus on treatment rather than punishment

Parallels with Other Treatment Courts

- Drug Court
- Mental Health Court
- DUI Court
- Domestic Violence Court

What Are Veteran's Treatment Courts

- Intended to address unique needs of specific populations
 - Veteran specific issues
 - PTSD/MH
 - Substance abuse
 - High risk/high needs
 - Excludes sex offenders
 - Qualified acceptance for violent offenders

Who Do They Serve?

| Justice Involved Veterans | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Probation & Parole | 1,063 or 7% | 1,168 or 8% | 1,159 or 7% |
| Prisons | 685 or 9% | 603 or 8% | 622 or 8% |

High Risk/High Needs?

- Level of Services Inventory – Revised (LSIR)
 - Quantitative survey of offender attributes and their situations relevant to level of supervision and treatment decisions
 - Intended to help predict parole outcome, recidivism
 - Results in score from 0 – 54 quantifying risk
 - Low: 0 - 15
 - Moderate: 16 – 30
 - High: 31 - 54
 - Intended to be a programming rather than sentencing tool

High Risk/High Needs?

- Preservation of resources
- Effect on low risk offenders
- Cutoff for eligibility

Structure

- Four phases – 12 to 18 months minimum
 - 1 – Orientation, Stabilization, Engagement
 - 2 – Treatment
 - 3 – Transition to Community Engagement
 - 4 – Maintenance of Recovery & Coping Skills

Therapeutic vs. Adversarial

- Expectations
 - Abstain from drug/alcohol use
 - Take prescribed medications
 - Attend required treatment
 - Submit to random UA's
 - Meet with Probation/Team members
 - SHOW UP!

Therapeutic vs. Adversarial

Expectations = Target Behaviors

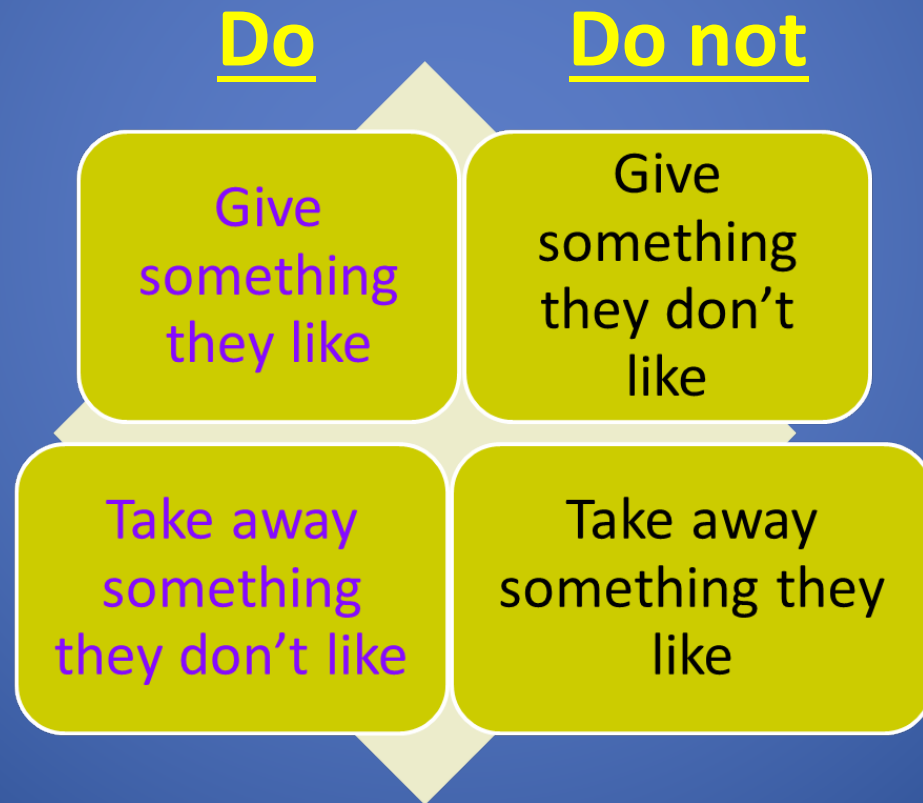
Motivating Behavioral Change

- What is the behavior to be targeted ?
- Does the behavior need an incentive, a sanction or a treatment response?

The purpose of incentives and sanctions is to keep participants engaged in treatment.

Target Behavior

Response:



Effective Incentives/Sanctions:

- Reliably monitor participants' behaviors
- Applied quickly and with certainty
- Administered on a gradually escalating sequence
- Imposed in a way to insure procedural fairness

Procedural Fairness

- Non-jail Sanctions
 - Essay
 - Community Service
 - Increased contact with treatment team
- Jail Sanctions
 - Start small
 - Over 6 days = diminishing returns

Objective

The goal in imposing sanctions is ***not*** punishment

The goal ***is*** to change a behavior

Structure

Team Approach

- Team members:
 - Prosecutor, Defense Counsel, Probation Officer, Treatment Provider, Law Enforcement, Court coordinator, Judge.
 - Each have individual perspective on participant's performance and needs

Veteran's Treatment Court Outcomes

- No national study specifically focused on veterans
- Largely a function of youth
 - First Drug Court: 1989 in Miami Dade County
 - First Mental Health Court: 1997 in Broward County, Florida
 - First VTC: 2008 in Buffalo, NY
- 60%/30%/3%

Summary

Video Introduction

<https://youtu.be/PrpytvX3YSE>

THE END

Questions?